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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 6 titles discuss the following topics: (1) the effects of comparison/contrast writing instruction on the reading comprehension of tenth-grade students; (2) an exploration of the role of language awareness in high school students' reading and writing; (3) a training study in instruction in the interpretation of a writer's argument; (4) a comparative study of the writing and reading achievement of children, ages nine and ten, in Great Britain and the United States; (5) combined reading and writing instruction; and (6) developmental trends and interrelationships among preprimary children's knowledge of writing and reading readiness skills. (EL)

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Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

Baker, Catherine Anne
EFFECTS OF COMPARISON/ CONTRAST WRITING INSTRUCTION ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS

Gowda, Nangar Sukumar
AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AWARENESS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' READING AND WRITING

Mosenthal, James Hastings
INSTRUCTION IN THE INTERPRETATION OF A WRITER'S ARGUMENT: A TRAINING STUDY

Popplewell, Scott Ray
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE WRITING AND READING ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN, AGES NINE AND TEN, IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

Reagan, Sally Barr
DOUBLE EXPOSURE: COMBINED READING-WRITING INSTRUCTION

Springate, Kay Wright
DEVELOPMENTAL TRENDS AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG PREPRIMARY CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE OF WRITING AND READING READINESS SKILLS

EFFECTS OF COMPARISON/CONTRAST WRITING INSTRUCTION ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS

Order No. DA8429329

BAKER, CATHERINE ANNE, PH.D. *Indiana State University*, 1984. 151pp. Director: Dr. David M. Memory, and Chairperson: Robert L. Pabst

This study investigated the influence of writing instruction on the reading comprehension of tenth-grade students. Although research has shown that instruction in the recognition of text structure can increase reading comprehension significantly and although it has been assumed that improvement in writing skill would improve reading skill as well, there has been little empirical research concerned with the actual influence of writing instruction. Thus, this study combined both ideas by attempting to determine the effect of writing instruction in text structure on reading comprehension.

This study employed eight classes of tenth-grade students taught by four teachers in two high schools. From these classes students were randomly selected to achieve even numbers of higher ability and lower ability readers within each class group. Each teacher taught one experimental and one control group, with the designation of each group determined randomly. The experimental treatment consisted of a lesson in writing comparison/contrast essays while each control lesson consisted of a reading comprehension lesson using comparative materials. All students received the same two-part posttest, which required them to write free recall statements of main ideas as well as answer multiple choice items. A series of *t* tests was used to compare mean scores of the experimental and control groups of higher and lower ability readers.

Although no statistically significant differences were found between experimental and control groups, the mean scores for

AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AWARENESS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' READING AND WRITING

GOWDA, NANGAR SUKUMAR, PH.D. *University of Toronto (Canada)*, 1984. Chairman: Professor C. Bay

This study investigates the process by which writers benefit from their reading, and seeks to clarify and explain this process by the psycholinguistic variable of Language Awareness. The study employs the data obtained from a sample of 48 students in academic stream Grade 12 English classes in the metropolitan Toronto area.

In this study Language Awareness is defined as students' ability to focus attention, during reading and writing, on salient text features (STF), such as diction, sentence style, and figurative expressions. Students' Language Awareness in this study is measured by means of four tasks developed by the researcher: (1) Text Evaluation and Text Preference, (2) "Maze" Reading, (3) "Cloze" Reading, and (4) STF Awareness in Writing. Students' Writing Ability is assessed by combining teachers' general ratings of students' essay writing competence with students' scores on an essay rated by two evaluators using a specific rating scale. *The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (1980), Level F* is used to assess the students' Reading Comprehension. *The Standard Progressive Matrices (1958)* are used to measure students' non-verbal Cognitive Ability. Additional data about students' reading and writing practices are obtained by means of questionnaires and interviews.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used to analyze the data collected in this study. The basic inferential questions are addressed through multiple regression. Analyses indicate that variability in the students' Writing Ability is significantly explained by the variability in their Language Awareness over and above the influence of their Reading Comprehension and non-verbal Cognitive Ability ($p < .01$). Variability in the students' Reading Comprehension achievement is significantly explained by the variability in their Language Awareness over and above the influence of their Writing Ability and non-verbal Cognitive Ability ($p < .01$). Variables Reading Comprehension and Writing Ability together share 50% of common variance with Language Awareness.

The results suggest the strong interactive nature of Language Awareness in the students' reading and writing. Employing the qualitative data, the study describes the functional role of Language Awareness in the reading-writing interactions. The study demonstrates how Language Awareness aids writers in acquiring, from reading, special skills and knowledge required for effective writing. Implications for research and practice are suggested.

INSTRUCTION IN THE INTERPRETATION OF A WRITER'S ARGUMENT: A TRAINING STUDY

Order No. DA8502253

MOSENTHAL, JAMES HASTINGS, PH.D. *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, 1984. 307pp.

The purpose of this study was to improve students' ability to comprehend expository text by training them in the use and control of a set of strategies defining purposive reading. The study derives its significance from its attempt to base instruction in reading comprehension on reading comprehension theory.

In this study, the act of comprehending text was described as purposive, with the goal the interpretation of the writer's argument. Direct comprehension instruction responsible to the concept of purposive reading was implemented in a sixth grade Social Studies classroom and an eighth grade Physical Science classroom over a six week period. In general, students in the experimental classes were asked, in the reading and discussion of text, to interpret portions of content in terms of what had gone before and in terms of a statement of the author's goal.

Data from a question set task and a summary task were collected approximately once a week over the six weeks of training. Three distinct measures were taken from the summaries written: (a) A grade assigned to each summary, (b) a measure of the number of statements in a summary containing superordinate information, and (c) a measure of a summary's structuredness. Delayed measures were taken approximately two weeks after training ended. Text selections were taken approximately two weeks after training ended. Text selections were taken from the textbooks used in the classrooms.

Results show that in comparison with control classes, the experimental students outperformed control students in three ways: (a) Both Social Studies and Physical Science experimental students wrote more structured summaries as a result of training; (b) in both the Social Studies and Physical Science classes, only experimental students wrote summaries of the most highly structured type, and these students performed better on all comprehension measures; (c) the majority of students wrote summaries ranked as of an intermediate structure, but of these summaries, the Social Studies experimental students significantly outperformed control students on the summary grade measure.

These results indicate that theory-based instruction in purposive reading is feasible and legitimate when considering students' ability to deal with the concept of a writer's argument.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE WRITING AND READING ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN, AGES NINE AND TEN, IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

Order No. DA8423048

POPPLEWELL, SCOTT RAY, ED.D. *Ball State University*, 1984. 115pp. Chairperson: Dr. Mary E. Harshbarger

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of relationship between writing achievement and reading achievement for children ages nine and ten from selected schools in Great Britain and the United States of America.

The *California Achievement Test* ("Reading Comprehension" subtest) was used to obtain reading comprehension scores. It consisted of forty items. Two writing samples were obtained from each child as a result of student participation in a writing strategy (Picture Setting). The writing samples were evaluated by a panel of five judges trained in using a holistic writing assessment scale. Two null hypotheses were tested by using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and subjecting the results to a t-test to determine if the correlation was significant. Two additional null hypotheses were tested by using a 2 x 2 multivariate analysis of variance and univariate analysis. The .05 level of significance was established as the critical probability level for the nonacceptance of hypotheses.

The British subjects in this study were 102 students from the Oakmere J.M.I. (Juniors Mixed and Infants) School in Hertfordshire, Potters Bar, England. The American subjects consisted of 119 students from the Fayette County School System in Connersville, Indiana.

The results of this study indicated: (1) a relationship was found between reading achievement when measured by the *California Achievement Test* ("Reading Comprehension" subtest) and writing achievement when measured by a holistic writing evaluation, (2) British subjects achieved higher reading scores than the United States subjects, (3) scores of males and females did not differ significantly as measured by the reading and writing evaluations in this study, and (4) writing achievement scores differ little between the subjects in Great Britain and the United States when evaluated holistically.

DOUBLE EXPOSURE: COMBINED READING-WRITING INSTRUCTION

Order No. DA8426674

REAGAN, SALLY BARR, PH.D. *Indiana University*, 1984. 318pp.

Recent research in reading, composition, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology has demonstrated strong correlations between reading ability and writing proficiency and suggested that combined reading-writing instruction may be the most effective pedagogical means of improving writing proficiency. Previous research on reading/writing in composition has been characterized by studies which base their conclusions on the results of either restrictive or artificial testing situations. None of the research has described *how* combined reading-writing instruction affects writing proficiency.

This study observed students enrolled in X101-W131, the Basic Skills reading-writing course taught Spring Semester, 1983, at Indiana University, in order to describe the effects of reading instruction on the composing processes of thirteen freshman basic writers. To gain a description of the context of the composing process, data were collected from four different sources: direct observation, interviews, writing samples, and audio and video-tapes of composing.

Pre-, mid- and post-tests measuring change in writing proficiency showed statistically significant improvement; mean scores on written retellings measuring changes in reading comprehension did not reach statistical significance. Results of pre- and post-semester interviews demonstrated positive changes in the students' attitude toward writing, toward themselves as writers, in their conception of the composing process, and in the composing process itself.

These results, while generally representative of changes in an intermediate group of six students and in-depth case studies of two students, cannot be solely attributed to pedagogical influence. While the statistical analysis suggest that combined reading-writing instruction helped improve Basic Skills students' writing, numerous other factors, such as course content, attendance, motivation, attitude toward self and literacy, educational and environmental background, the instructors' role and attitude toward students and subject, were also highly influential and should not be ignored. Particularly in the field of composition, quantitative evaluations alone cannot explain the results of various methods of pedagogical intervention nor describe exactly how they affect the student. To better understand the composing process, composition research needs to go beyond examination of product and process and also study the individual student through multi-faceted interviews and observations.

DEVELOPMENTAL TRENDS AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG PREPRIMARY CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE OF WRITING AND READING READINESS SKILLS

Order No. DA8428435

SPRINGATE, KAY WRIGHT, ED.D. *University of Kentucky*, 1984. 292pp. Director: Dr. Connie A. Bridge

This study explored the development and interrelationships relative to preprimary children's knowledge of writing's functions and forms. Furthermore, possible interrelationships among various aspects of their writing knowledge and reading readiness skills were also studied.

Tasks were administered to 48 middle income children composing three, four, and five-year-old groups. Knowledge of writing functions was assessed using story vignettes designed to tap children's understanding of three everyday uses of writing. Three tasks assessed knowledge of writing forms. The first task measured their use of unit features and/or recognition rules: linearity, spacing, variety, and multiplicity, in visually discerning writing forms. The second and third tasks assessed knowledge of production rules: directionality, linearity, spacing, and orthography, via forming words with magnetic letters; and name writing skills with paper and pencil, respectively. The three reading readiness tasks assessed auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, and letter naming knowledge.

Major findings. (1) Knowledge of the communicative purposes of listing, labeling and letter writing increased across age groups. There was a greater understanding of the practical applications of labeling, followed by letter writing, and listing, respectively. (2) There was a significant interaction ($p < .005$) between children's use of features and recognition rules to distinguish writing forms. With increasing age, children appeared to become more interested in the presence of English letter features in the units than the display's adherence to rules. (3) Using magnetic letters in word production, children experienced the greatest success in their use of the spacing rule, followed by the linearity, directionality, and orthography rules, respectively. (4) While one-half of the three-year-olds drew pictures to represent their names, all of the five-year-old children wrote at least their first name. (5) Performance scores on the reading readiness measures increased across age group. (6) As measured by these tasks, the significant interrelationships among the various aspects of reading readiness and writing knowledge varied among the age groups.

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